

Shelby.Michael

From: Jeff McFerrin
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2002 4:16 PM
To: shelby@niehs.nih.gov
Subject: Ethylene Glycol

Shelby,

I was recently forwarded a 3 page document from an attendee at a recent lubricant show. This document and the presentation related to the document centers around an upcoming study to attempt to further 'reclassify' ethylene glycol (as well as propylene glycol). In 1995, MEG suddenly became hazardous and now I see it may all of sudden become a class 1, 2, or 3 carcinogen. I hope that in the panel, apparently of people not in the MEG industry, more homework is actually done on REAL risks than the homework done on the product overview. The sacharrin sweetener (?spelling) study for example from years ago turned out untrue and was politically based in nature from what I hear. The 3 page document lists MEG as a high production volume chemical used chiefly in antifreeze and as a de-icer for aircraft. While these are uses, they represent only 14% of the MEG uses. (For the typical non-industry person antifreeze is generally mentioned as a use because the average person can relate to that easier I understand.) The area of antifreeze is mature and not growing, this 14% is dwindling each year due to increases in demand for other uses. All polyester products (fiber, PET resin, film, etc.) contain about 34% ethylene glycol. Poly fiber represents about 52% of the MEG market, Film and industrial ~20%, PET resin ~14%.

It seems this study is more about environmental activism or legal pursuits, or just a concern on antifreeze in general. I hope that beyond universities and trade shows that do not showcase MEG for example you are looking for a balanced panel. I'd like to list for you the MEG producers in the United States over 300,000 metric tons per year so that they have an opportunity to be on a panel before our industry gets rail roaded again with more regulations. They are Dow, Shell, Huntsman, PD Glycol, Old World Industries, and Formosa Plastics. There are 3 others and then several 'non-basic' producers like my company perhaps too small to invest in scientists to donate time and energy to be on a panel. We have to rely on organizations such as SOCMA to be our voice in the political arena.

I have no desire to be on the panel but just wanted to informally offer my 'Public Input'. These panels are needed, and cancer has touched my family and some of my friends. It is important to identify carcinogens but not just have witch hunts. Your organization and many like it offer lots of value to industry and the public, I just wanted to put my two cents in in hopes that maybe more value will come out of it. I can think of many more dangerous materials than MEG, if the goal is political (like go to PG based AF as opposed to EG based) there is money talking, not performance or practicality and economics for the end user. Bitterants can be added to MEG to take the sweetness out and there are other safeguards that can be taken and environments can be altered where fumes exist.

Good luck in your endeavor,

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